

**The University of Texas at El Paso**  
**Department of Communication**  
**Fall 2020**  
**COMM 4323: Case Studies in Public Relations**  
**CRN 11185**

**MATERIALS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- *Cases in Public Relations Management* by Patricia Swan, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition  
Routledge (2020)

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:**

**Associate Professor of Practice:** Eli Garcia  
**Office:** COTTON 204  
**Virtual office hours:** by appointment

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**COURSE CONTENT**

**Course Description:**

COMM 4323 studies the role of public relations in organizational problem-solving practices. Through the analysis of real-life cases you will study how the functions of public relations help manage and reconcile the conflicts/challenges that arise between an organization and its diverse stakeholders.

**Online Course Format:**

- We will follow an asynchronous online modality (no class meetings).
- We will use the blackboard learning platform.
- The content for the course will be divided in weekly modules.

For each week:

- You will be assigned to read either a case study from your book, or from the journal articles available. If there is a reading from a journal article the link will be provided to you via blackboard.
- Based on the textbook readings you will answer a weekly discussion question and respond to 2 classmates
- We will also submit 5 written case study assignments (check calendar for more information).
- There will be a final reflection paper (check calendar for more information)

## GRADING

We will follow a 1000-point scale.

- A= 1000-900 points
- B= 899-800 points
- C= 799-700 points
- D= 600-699 points
- F= 599 points and below

The following pints will be distributed in the following manner:

- 15 weekly discussion posts @ 35 points each.....525 Points
- 4 Case Study Written Assignments @ 100 each..... 400 Points
- Final Reflection Paper (Written Assignment).....75 Points

Total Points \_\_\_\_\_ 1000 Points

### Rubrics

#### Weekly Discussions (15 @ 35 pointes each, due weekly):

Every week we will discuss a series of different topics related to the course’s material. This is a great opportunity to share your perspectives on the PR strategies applied in each of the case studies that we will analyze through our course. You will be asked to post an initial response to the week’s discussion question/s and then post 2 replies to classmates. As always, the golden rule of corporate communication applies: all postings should be professional, respectful and relevant to the focus of the discussion.

Your postings and replies will be graded based on the following rubric:

	Excellent – 25 Points	Good – 20 Points	Acceptable – 15 Points	Unsatisfactory – 10 points or less
<b>Initial Response</b>	Initial reply was posted on time, meets the length requirement, and directly answers the discussion question(s). Excellent replies often include quotes from reading material.	Initial reply was posted on time, meets the length requirement, and answers the discussion question(s).	Initial reply was posted late or does not meet the length requirement. However, the post still directly answers the discussion question(s).	The initial reply is missing or does not answer the discussion question(s).
	Excellent – 5 Points	Good – 4 Points	Acceptable – 3 Points	Unsatisfactory – 2 points or less

<b>Peer Response 1</b>	First peer reply was posted on time and contributes meaningfully to the discussion by introducing new perspectives.	First peer reply contributes meaningfully to the discussion.	First peer reply was late but still contributes to the discussion.	First peer reply is missing or only states "I agree" or "I disagree" without advancing the discussion in any way.
	<b>Excellent – 5 Points</b>	<b>Good – 4 Points</b>	<b>Acceptable – 3 Points</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory – 2 points or less</b>
<b>Peer Response 2</b>	Second peer reply was posted on time and contributes meaningfully to the discussion by introducing new perspectives.	Second peer reply contributes meaningfully to the discussion.	Second peer reply was late but still contributes to the discussion.	Second peer reply is missing or only states "I agree" or "I disagree" without advancing the discussion in any way.

### **Case Study Written Assignment Rubric (4 @ 100 points each):**

You will have the opportunity to analyze, critique and report on real life public relations case studies. Case studies are available in your textbook, please check calendar for additional info.

**Please follow the instructions and rubric mentioned below:**

- Your individual written reports should be around 5 -7 pages.
- They should demonstrate an in-depth written analysis-critique of the assigned case.
- Make sure you answer the required questions in paragraph format.
- Please follow APA style and provide a reference page.

<b>PR Case Study Rubric Written Assignment</b>		<b>100 Total Possible Points</b>
<b>Introduction</b> The purpose of this section is to guide the reader on the relevance of your case study to contemporary business practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an overview of the corporate communication concepts that will be discussed in your document.</li> <li>• Provide a justification on why your document is valuable to Business and Corporate Communications practitioners.</li> </ul> Describe what specific business and organizational communication knowledge will a business practitioner obtain from your document.		10 points
<b>Problem/Opportunity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify main key players and explain their influence in the case study</li> <li>• Explain the <b>communication and ethical</b> problems and opportunities the case presents for all parties involved. (You can use the PRSA and Arthur Page codes of ethics to help you identify main problems and opportunities.)</li> <li>• Provide a SWOT analysis for <b>all key players identified in the previous section</b></li> </ul>		15 points

<b>Case Analysis</b> (Answers to Case Questions from textbook) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure you provide your answers <b>from a communication perspective!</b></li> <li>• Identify and discuss how key PR <b>concepts are portrayed/applied in the case study</b></li> </ul>	35points
<b>Critique</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an overall critique on how the key players reacted to this case</li> </ul>	20 points
<b>Best Practices conclusion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did you learn from this case?</li> <li>• From a <i>Best Practices</i> approach, what would be your <b>4 Best Practice recommendations</b> for business and corporate communication professionals?</li> </ul>	20 points

### **Final Reflection Paper (1 @ 75 points)**

- For this assignment you will reflect on the different corporate communication concepts we have discussed in class.
- Provide an introduction to your document discussing why it is relevant to business professionals and the value your document will provide to them. **(5 Points)**
- Present & provide your personal definition of strategic business/corporate communication and discuss its relevance to contemporary business practices. **(15 points)**
- Describe which 3 course topics you enjoyed the most/ found most relevant and why **(15 Points)**
- Please provide 3 specific examples directly related to how you can apply the knowledge learned in class to your chosen professional life. **(15points)**
- Describe how the material covered in our course can help you become a more competitive professional in your field. **(15 points)**
- Provide a strong conclusion to your document **(10 points)**
- Make sure your document flows and proper transitions are applied.
- Use proper citations were applicable.
- Use font 12, double space, times new roman
- Have fun!!

### **What to Expect from the Instructor**

The best way to communicate with your instructor is via email. Always include in the subject of your email "Online COMM 4323" When sending an email and your name. All emails will be answered within 48 hrs. Graded assignments will be posted a week after the submission date.

### **Participation**

Your active participation extremely important! There will be an opportunity to discuss and interact with classmates through *discussion questions* and *assignments*, which will be graded. Please refer to the "Assignments and Grading" sections for discussion questions and assignments' points and value.

### **Academic Dishonesty Statement**

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion.

- *Cheating* may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports.
- *Plagiarism* occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents another person's words or ideas as his or her own.
- *Collusion* involves unauthorized collaboration with another person or group to commit any academically dishonest act.

Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. You can find more information in the UTEP *Handbook of Operating Procedures*, under the heading "[Alleged Student Scholastic Dishonesty](#)," and in the [Regents' Rules and Regulations](#).

### **Late Policy**

Deadlines for all discussion questions and written assignments will be strictly enforced. No quizzes, discussion questions or written assignments will be accepted after deadline. Missing a deadline is equivalent of not doing the assignment. PR professionals must meet strict deadlines. Students are expected to do the same.

### **Library Information**

Access the UTEP Library by visiting <http://libraryweb.utep.edu/>.

### **Disability Statement**

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email at [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or visit the office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106.

For additional information, please visit the CASS website at [www.sa.utep.edu/cass](http://www.sa.utep.edu/cass).

Have a great learning experience!

### **Responsible, Ethical and Effective Electronic Communication**

It is important to share a word of caution so we can become wiser about interpersonal distance learning communications. In an online environment, many of the feelings or impressions that are transmitted via body language in face-to-face communications are lost. Consequently, interpreting emotions and innuendos can be difficult. Only what is written, or drawn, carries the message. Often, excitement can be misinterpreted as anger or insult. We all need to keep this in mind as we communicate.

Words in print may seem harmless, but they can injure us emotionally when working at a distance. Hence, we must be conscious of how we communicate while working at a distance and use good *netiquette*, that is, online communication etiquette. For example, your classmates may not know who is posting a comment, so clearly identify yourself when posting to a discussion board. Furthermore, avoid using all capital letters in electronic communication, as all caps come across as shouting.

The standard netiquette for participation in networked discussion requires that all comments focus on the topic at hand, without becoming personalized, and be substantive in nature. **In other words, you certainly may disagree with others, but you must do so respectfully.** You may express strong beliefs or emotions, but you may not get so carried away that you lose all perspective on the course itself.

You can find more information on netiquette, the etiquette of Internet communication, at [www.albion.com/netiquette](http://www.albion.com/netiquette)

## COURSE CALENDAR

The instructor reserves the right to make necessary changes in the schedule/calendar/assignments depending on the needs of the class.

Week	Assignments	Due	Points
<b>Week 1</b> August 24 <sup>th</sup> - Augth 30 <sup>th</sup>	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 1 “A Brief Introduction to Public Relations” (page 1)</li> </ul>	Thursday August 27th	0
	Discussion 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introductions Let us know you are here!</li> </ul>	Initial Post: Wednesday August 26th, 11:00 PM MST  2 Replies: Saturday August 29th, 11:00 PM MST	0
	Discussion 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key Concepts of Public Relations</li> </ul>	Initial Discussion Post: Thursday August 27 <sup>th</sup> 11:00 PM MST  2 Replies: Sunday August 30 <sup>th</sup> , 11:00 PM MST	35
<b>Week 2 Aug</b> <b>31<sup>st</sup>-Sep 6<sup>th</sup></b>	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 2 “Ethics and the Law” (page 18)</li> </ul>	Wednesday September 2 <sup>nd</sup>	0
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case Study: “What would you do? (page 21)</li> </ul>	Initial Discussion Post: Thursday September 3rd, 11:00 PM MST  2 Replies: Sunday September 6th 11:00 PM MST	35
<b>Week 3</b> <b>Sep 7<sup>th</sup>-Sep 13<sup>th</sup></b>	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Chocolate Milk Study’s News Release Brings Unwanted Attention (page 24)</li> </ul>	Wednesday September 9th	0

	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case study “Chocolate Milk Study’s News Release Brings Unwanted Attention (page 24)</li> </ul>	<p>Initial Discussion Post: Thursday Sep 10th 11:00 PM MTS</p> <p>2 Replies: Sunday September 13<sup>th</sup> 11:00 PM MTS</p>	35
<b>Week 4</b> Sep 14 <sup>th</sup> - Sep 20 <sup>th</sup>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 4: “ Media Relations” (page 103)</li> <li>Case study: “ Domino’s Regaining Customer Trust After Employee Prank” (page 148)</li> </ul>	Wednesday September 16th	0
	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case study: “Domino’s Regaining Customer Trust After Employee Prank” page 148</li> </ul>	<p>Initial Discussion Post: Thursday Sep 17th 11:00 PM MST</p> <p>2 Replies: Sunday September 20th 11:00 PM MST</p>	35
	<p><b>Written Case Study Assignment #1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>“Domino’s Regaining Customer Trust After Employee Prank” page 148</b></li> </ul>	<b>Sunday September 20th</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Week 5</b> Sep 21 <sup>st</sup> – Sep 27 <sup>th</sup>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: When every Drop Counts. ALS Ice Bucket Challenge Floods Nonprofit with Cash” (page 121)</li> </ul>	Wednesday September 23 <sup>rd</sup>	0
	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“When every Drop Counts. ALS Ice Bucket Challenge Floods Nonprofit with Cash” (page 121)</li> </ul>	<p>Initial Discussion Post: Thursday September 24th 11:00 PM MST</p> <p>2 Replies: Sunday September 27<sup>th</sup> 11:00 PM MST</p>	35
<b>Week 6</b> Sep 28 <sup>th</sup> -Oct 4 <sup>th</sup>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 8; “Entertainment and Leisure” (page 378)</li> <li>Case: “Disclosure is always in Style” (page 34)</li> </ul>	Wednesday September 30th	

	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: “Disclosure is always in Style “ (page 34)</li> </ul>	<p>Initial Discussion Post: Thursday October 1st 11:00 PM MST</p> <p>2 Replies: Sunday October 4th 11:00 PM MST</p>	35
<b>Week 7 October 5<sup>th</sup>- October 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: Lean Textured Beef or Pink Slime?” (page 190)</li> </ul>	Wednesday October 7th	0
	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: Lean Textured Beef or Pink Slime?” (page 190)</li> </ul>	<p>Initial Discussion Post: Thursday October 8th 11:00 PM MST</p> <p>2 Replies: Sunday October 11th 11:00 PM MST</p>	35
	<p><b>Written Case Study Assignment #2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Case: Lean Textured Beef or Pink Slime?” (page 190)</b></li> </ul>	<b>Sunday October 11th</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Week 8 October 12<sup>th</sup>- October 18<sup>th</sup></b>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 6 Activism (page 257)</li> <li>Case: “Guitar Hero Strikes a Chord: Social Media Teaches Customer Service Lesson” (page 312)</li> </ul>	Wednesday October 14th	0
	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: “Guitar Hero Strikes a Chord: Social Media Teaches Customer Service Lesson” (page 312)</li> </ul>	<p>Initial Discussion Post: Thursday October 15th 11:00 PM MST</p> <p>2 Replies: Sunday October 18th 11:00 PM MST</p>	35
<b>Week 9 October 19<sup>th</sup>- October 25<sup>th</sup></b>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: “Blackfish Documentary Mobilizes SeaWorld Activists” (page 262)</li> </ul>	Wednesday October 21 <sup>st</sup>	0
	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: Blackfish Documentary Mobilizes SeaWorld Activists” (page 262)</li> </ul>	Initial Discussion Post: Thursday October 22nd 11:00 PM MST	35



		2 Replies: Sunday October 25th 11:00 PM MST	
<b>Week 10</b> October 26 <sup>th</sup> - November 1st	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: “SeaWorld Responds with Truth Campaign” (page 278)</li> </ul>	Wednesday October 28th	0
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: “SeaWorld Responds with Truth Campaign” (page 278)</li> </ul>	Initial Discussion Post: Thursday October 29 <sup>th</sup>  11:00 PM MST  2 Replies: Sunday November 1st 11:00 PM MST	35
	<b>Written Case Study Assignment #3:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“ Case: “SeaWorld Responds with Truth Campaign” (page 278)</li> </ul>	<b>Sunday November 1st</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Week 11</b> <b>November</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup>-November</b> <b>8<sup>th</sup></b>	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 10: “Cultural and Other Considerations” (page 489)</li> <li>Case: “Shark Fin Hong Kong” (page 512)</li> </ul>	Wednesday November 4th	0
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: “Shark Fin Soup: Disney Hong Kong Loses Magic for Some” (page 512)</li> </ul>	Initial Discussion Post: Thursday November 5 <sup>th</sup> 11:00 PM MST  2 Replies: Sunday November 8th 11:00 PM MST	35
<b>Week 12</b> <b>November 9<sup>th</sup>-</b> <b>November</b> <b>15<sup>th</sup></b>	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 5: Conflict Management (page 168)</li> <li>Beyond Disgusting : Bacteria-Fighting Mom Takes on restaurant Play Areas” (page 296)</li> </ul>	Wednesday Nov 11th	0
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beyond Disgusting : Bacteria-Fighting Mom Takes on restaurant Play Areas” (page 296)</li> </ul>	Initial Discussion Post: Thursday November 12 <sup>th</sup> 11:00 PM MST	35

		2 Replies: Sunday November 15th 11:00 PM MST	
<b>Week 13 November 16<sup>th</sup>- November 21<sup>st</sup></b>	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: Flying the Unfriendly Skies: Coffee, tea or savage Beating?" (page 175)</li> </ul>	Wednesday Nov 18th	0
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: Flying the Unfriendly Skies: Coffee, tea or savage Beating?" (page 175)</li> </ul>	Initial Discussion Post: Thursday November 19 <sup>h</sup> 11:00 PM MST  2 Replies: Sunday November 22 <sup>nd</sup> 11:00 PM MST	35
	<b>Written Case Study Assignment #4:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Case: Flying the Unfriendly Skies: Coffee, tea or savage Beating?" (page 175)</b></li> </ul>	<b>Sunday September November 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Week 14</b>	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: "Deepwater Horizon Blowout: Rehabilitating a Catastrophic Spill" (page 231)</li> </ul>	Tuesday Nov 25th	0
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: "Deepwater Horizon Blowout: Rehabilitating a Catastrophic Spill" (page 231)</li> </ul>	Initial Discussion Post: Wednesday November 25 <sup>th</sup> 11:00 PM MST  2 Replies: Sunday November 29th 11:00 PM MST	35
<b>Week 15</b>	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: Going back in time: The Titanic(Available through the library)</li> </ul>	Wednesday December 2 <sup>nd</sup>	0
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: Going back in time: The Titanic(Available through the library)</li> </ul>	Initial Discussion Post: Thursday December 3rd MST  2 Replies: Sunday December 6 <sup>th</sup> 1:00 PM MST	35
	<b>Final Written Assignment:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Reflection Paper</b></li> </ul>		<b>75</b>

		<b>Sunday December 6th</b>	
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